



Become a champion, and motivate community members to ensure adequate nutrition and health care of the pregnant mother

PRI and VHSNC Members
Your leadership and active support matters!

Ensuring adequate nutrition and health care of pregnant women and the unborn baby

Undernourished pregnant women give birth to small, low birth weight babies who are often born before time and are at high risk of illness and death. In long term, malnutrition contributes to low IQ, poor school performance, frequent illness in childhood, and low productivity/earnings in adult life.

As a responsible and respected representative of a panchayat or Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committee (VHSNC), you can play an important role in reducing undernutrition by emphasizing and spreading awareness about the importance of maternal nutrition and health care in the community, and among the male members in particular. Your active participation can not only save the life of a mother and child but also contribute to build an active and healthy society.

Benefits of adequate nutrition and health care of pregnant women:



Safe delivery



Reduces the risk of complication and even death during pregnancy or during delivery



Proper physical, cognitive and mental development of foetus/baby



SAVES Money (No high expenses to manage complications in mother and baby)

Five simple rules to ensure pregnant women's nutrition and health care needs are prioritized in the community:

A pregnant woman must:

1. Consume adequate (minimum 5 different types of foods) nutrient-rich, seasonal and locally available diet, (with roti/rice), daily such as:
 - » Dark green leafy vegetables,
 - » Yellow or orange-colored fruits/vegetables such as (pumpkin, ripe mango, ripe papaya, etc
 - » Milk or milk products,
 - » Lentils/pulses, and
 - » Eggs, if acceptable in the family diet and add fish or meat/chicken, if non-vegetarian, several times a week.
2. Consume 1 IFA tablet every day from the fourth month of pregnancy till delivery (180 tablets) before sleeping at night.
3. Consume 2 calcium tablets (1 tablet after breakfast and 1 tablet after lunch) every day from the fourth month of pregnancy till delivery (360 tablets).

4. Have antenatal care (ANC) check-ups during VHSND or at a nearby health center regularly and check whether gain in weight is adequate (1.5–2kg/ month or 10–12kg during pregnancy).
5. Adopt safe hygiene practices such as hand washing with soap before preparing and eating food, and after using toilet or cleaning child feces. Consume properly washed vegetables/fruits.

What can you do?

You can:

1. Build a supportive environment and awareness about the above 'Five Golden Rules for Maternal Nutrition' by organizing special events in the community and especially motivate the husbands/male members to:
 - » Prioritize and give importance to pregnant women's nutrition and health care. Buy food from recommended food groups for consumption of pregnant women.
 - » Ensure availability of IFA and calcium tablets at home for daily consumption by pregnant women.
 - » Accompany pregnant women for regular ante-natal check-ups and remain in touch with local ASHA, ANM for more help and information.
 - » Keep track, if a pregnant woman is gaining adequate weight (1.5-2 kg every month from fourth month onwards) and that she has adequate quantity of food every day.
 - » Follow safe sanitation and hygiene practices at home.
 - » Arrange for institutional delivery.
2. Ensure that every pregnant woman in the village have access to Public Distribution System and ICDS take home rations.
3. Facilitate mobilization of pregnant women, particularly the mother-in-laws and husbands, with the support of the ANM, AWW and ASHA in promoting awareness about maternal nutrition and its importance.
4. Ensure that VHND takes place and need-based counselling is provided to pregnant women and their families by frontline workers.
5. Discuss these issues during any gatherings or occasions so as to make it a social and a community movement.
6. Include issues of maternal nutrition and health care in Village Planning Agenda/Gram-Sabha meetings and review the progress together with ASHA/AWW/ANM. Address problems and provide support as required.

